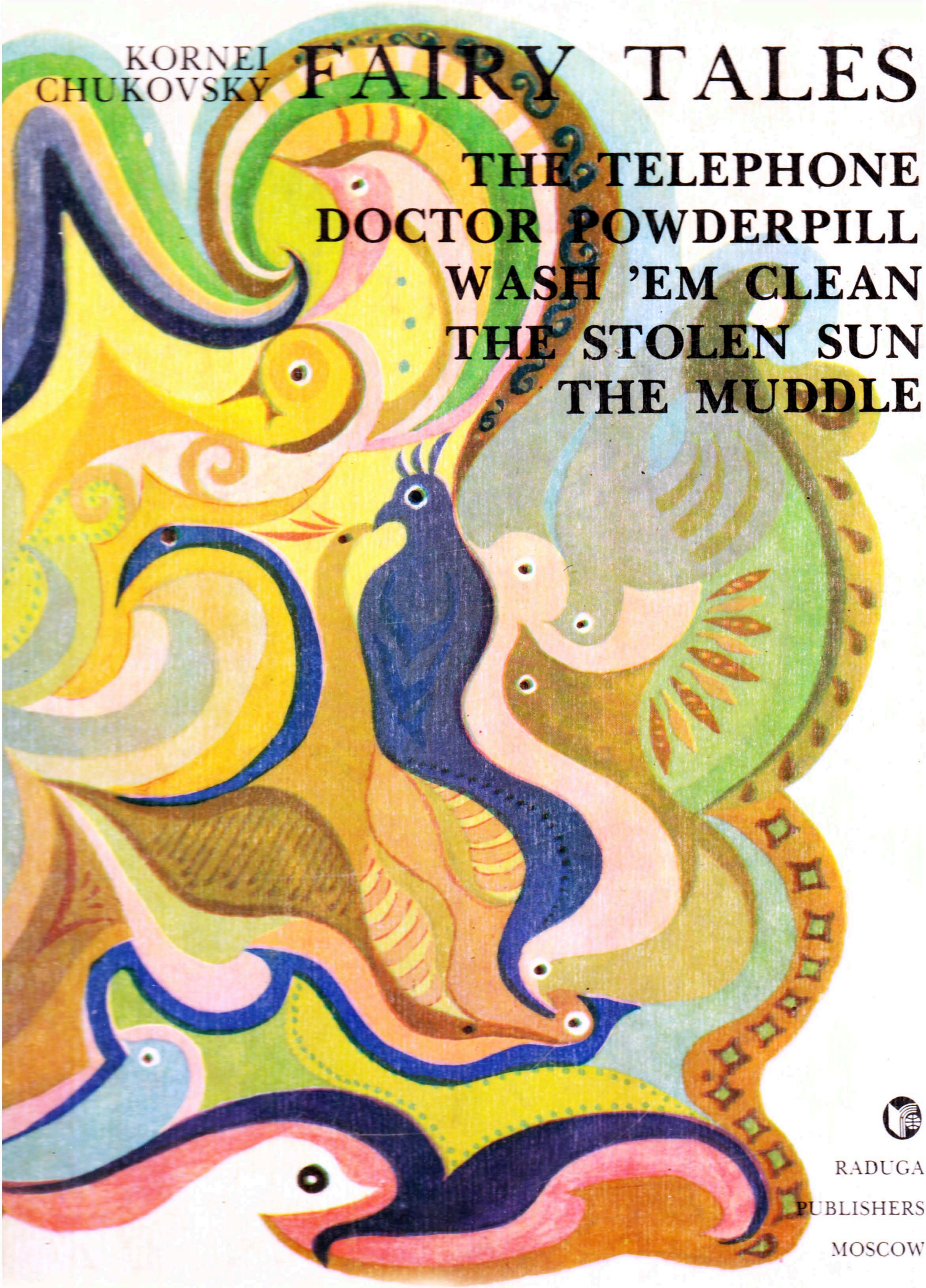
KORNEI CHUKOVSKY

FAIRY TALES

THE TELEPHONE
DOCTOR POWDERPILL
WASH 'EM CLEAN
THE STOLEN SUN
THE MUDDLE



RADUGA
PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW

KORNEI CHUKOVSKY



FAIRY TALES



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MOSCOW

Translated from the Russian

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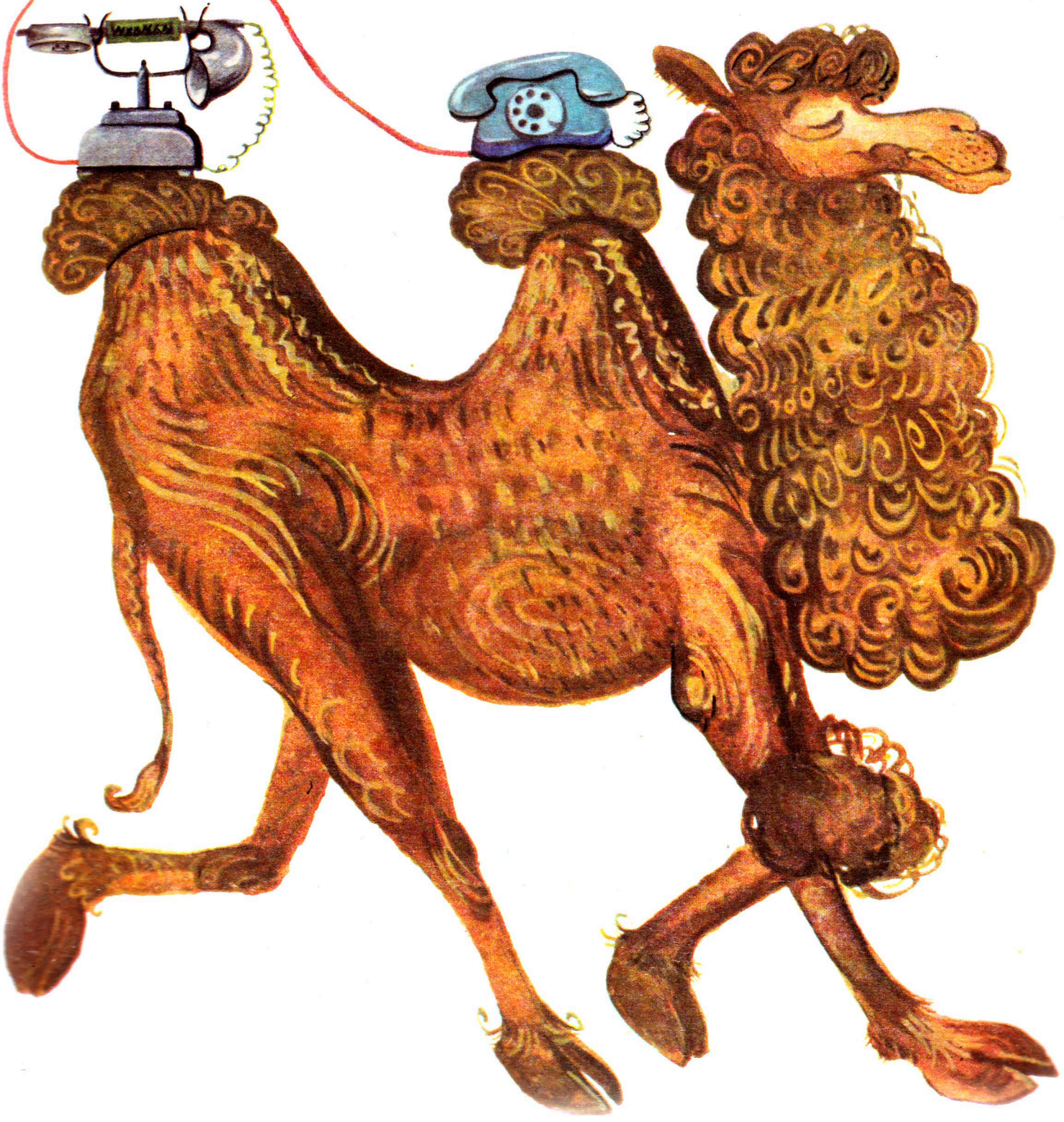
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THE TELEPHONE

1

My telephone rang.
"Hello,
Who's speaking?"
"The Elephant."
"Oh,
Where do you happen to be?"
"Jungle-Town, Camel-Street, 3."
"What do you want?"
"Some chocolate, sweet,
To give my sonnie a bit of a treat."
"A pound or two?"
"Oh, a ton will do.



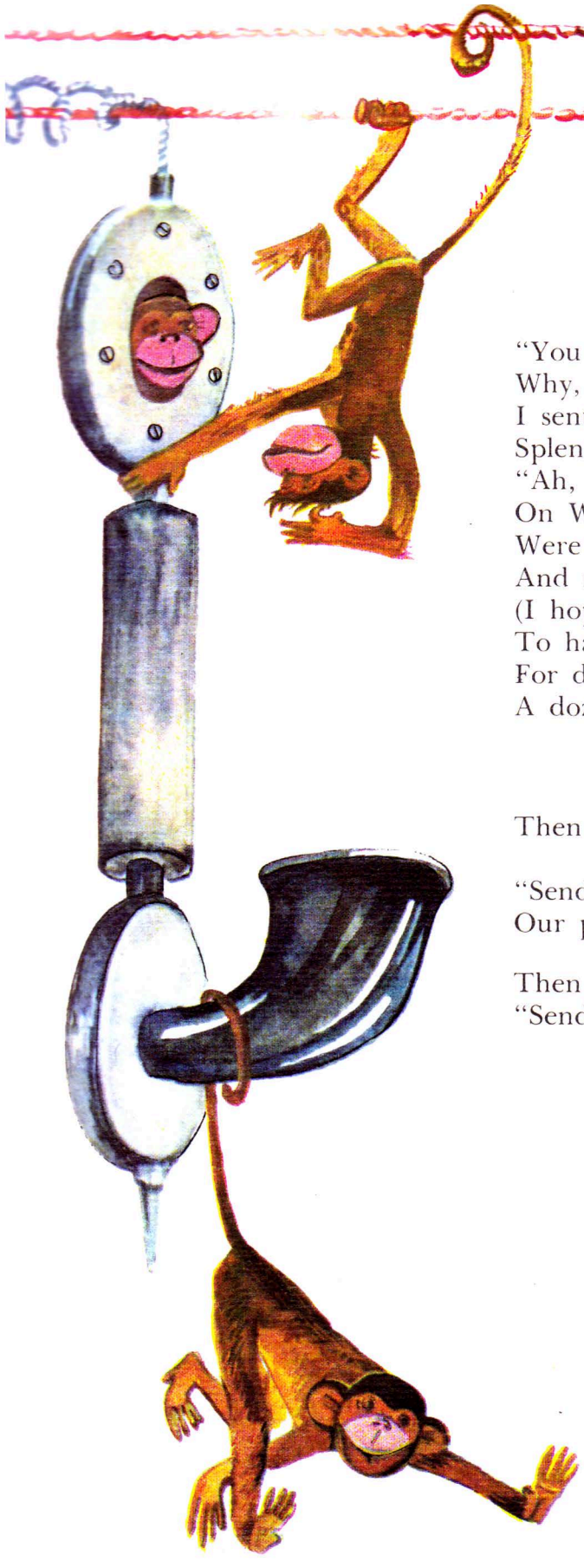

He just wants a bite,
He's a wee little mite."



2

The Crocodile
phoned me next.
And his voice
was terribly vexed:

"I'm sorry, dear friend,
But I wish you could send
A couple of pairs of galoshes
For me and my wife and Totosha—"

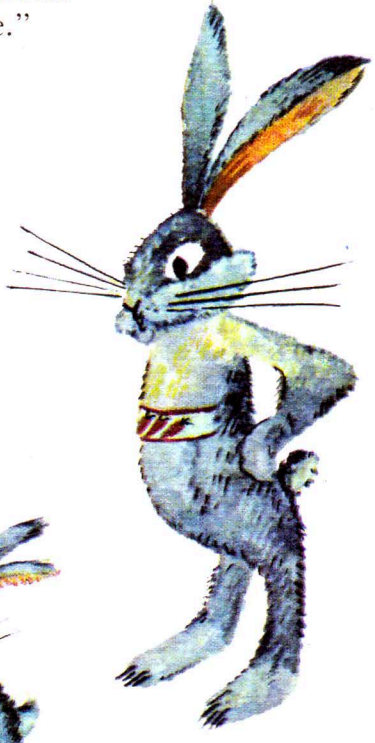


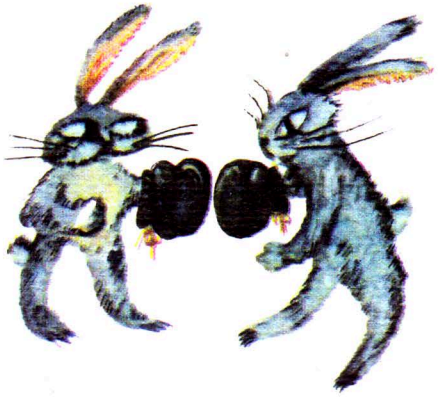
"You do wear them fast!
Why, Wednesday last
I sent you a dozen or two,
Splendid ones too, quite new!"
"Ah, those that you sent us
On Wednesday last
Were all eaten up very fast.
And now we are waiting
(I hope not in vain)
To have some galoshes
For dinner again.
A dozen of sweet new galoshes!"

3

Then some Bunnies called,
wheezing and sneezing:
"Send us mittens,
Our paws are freezing."

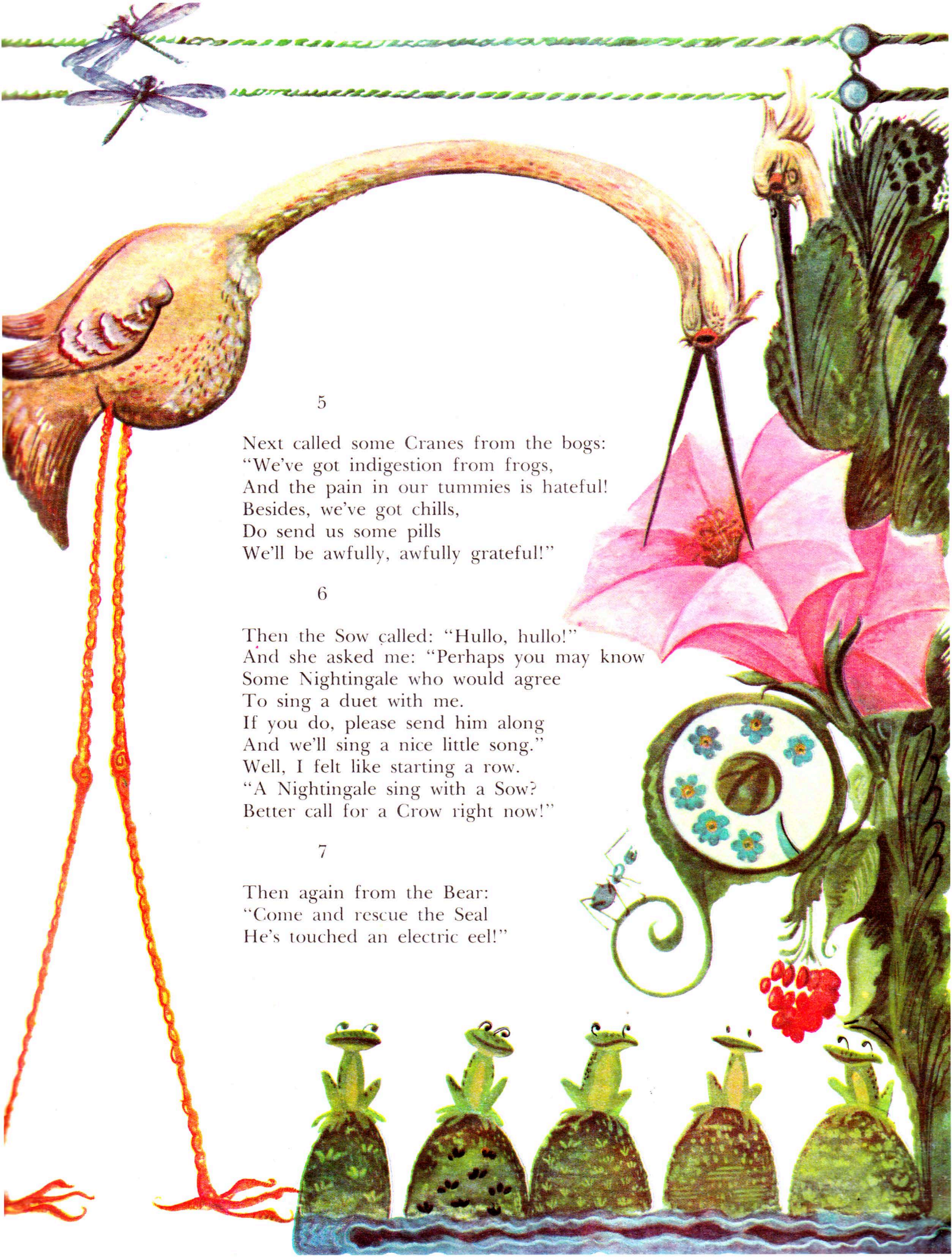
Then a call came from two Chimpanzees:
"Send us some books, will you please."





The next one to call was Bruin:
My ear-drums were threatened with ruin.
"Now look here, my friend, don't bellow!
Can't you speak like a decent old fellow!"
But he kept on mooing and booing,
Such a worrisome,
bothersome Bruin!
"Hang up the receiver,
please!"





5

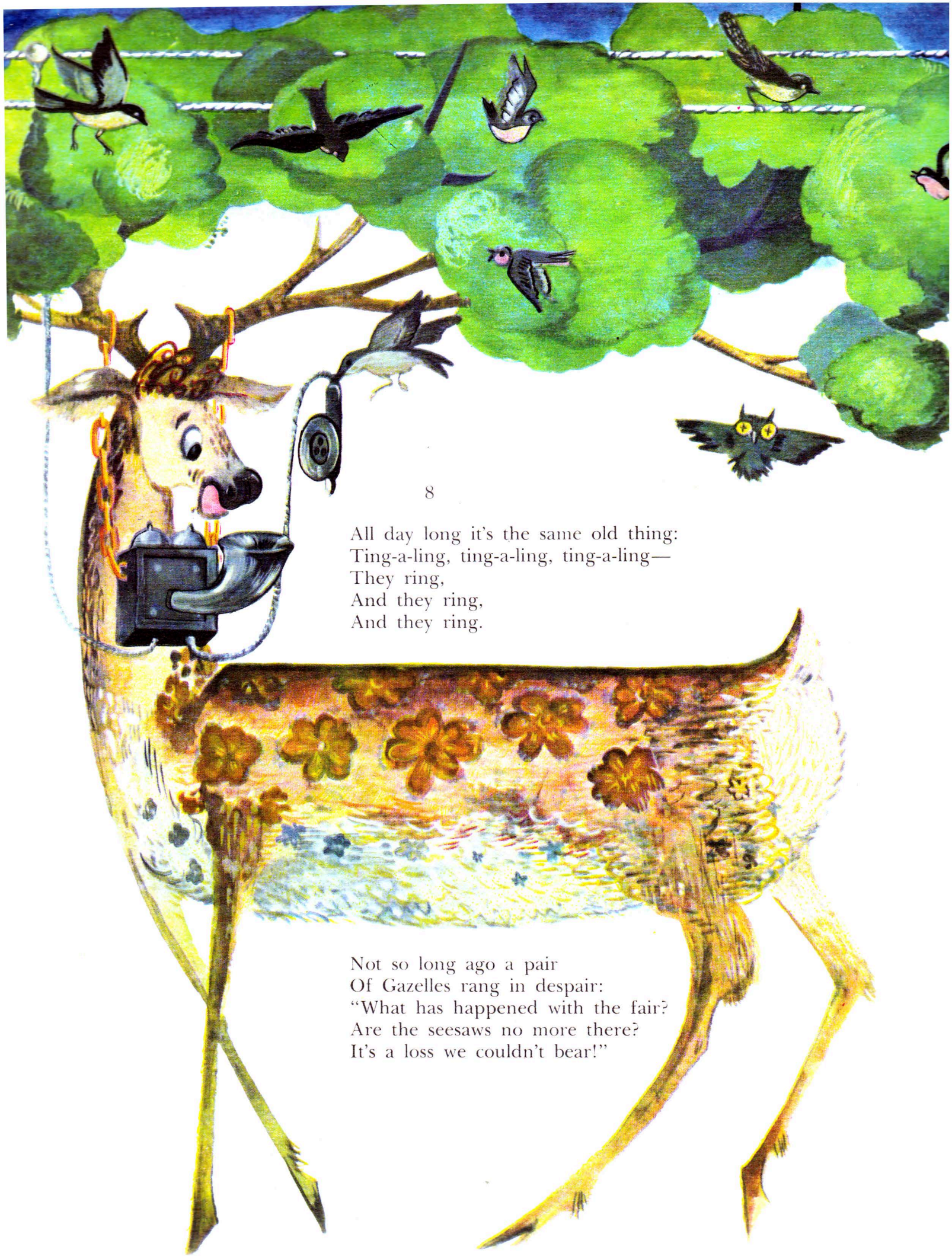
Next called some Cranes from the bogs:
"We've got indigestion from frogs,
And the pain in our tummies is hateful!
Besides, we've got chills,
Do send us some pills
We'll be awfully, awfully grateful!"

6

Then the Sow called: "Hullo, hullo!"
And she asked me: "Perhaps you may know
Some Nightingale who would agree
To sing a duet with me.
If you do, please send him along
And we'll sing a nice little song."
Well, I felt like starting a row.
"A Nightingale sing with a Sow?
Better call for a Crow right now!"

7

Then again from the Bear:
"Come and rescue the Seal
He's touched an electric eel!"



All day long it's the same old thing:
Ting-a-ling, ting-a-ling, ting-a-ling—
They ring,
And they ring,
And they ring.

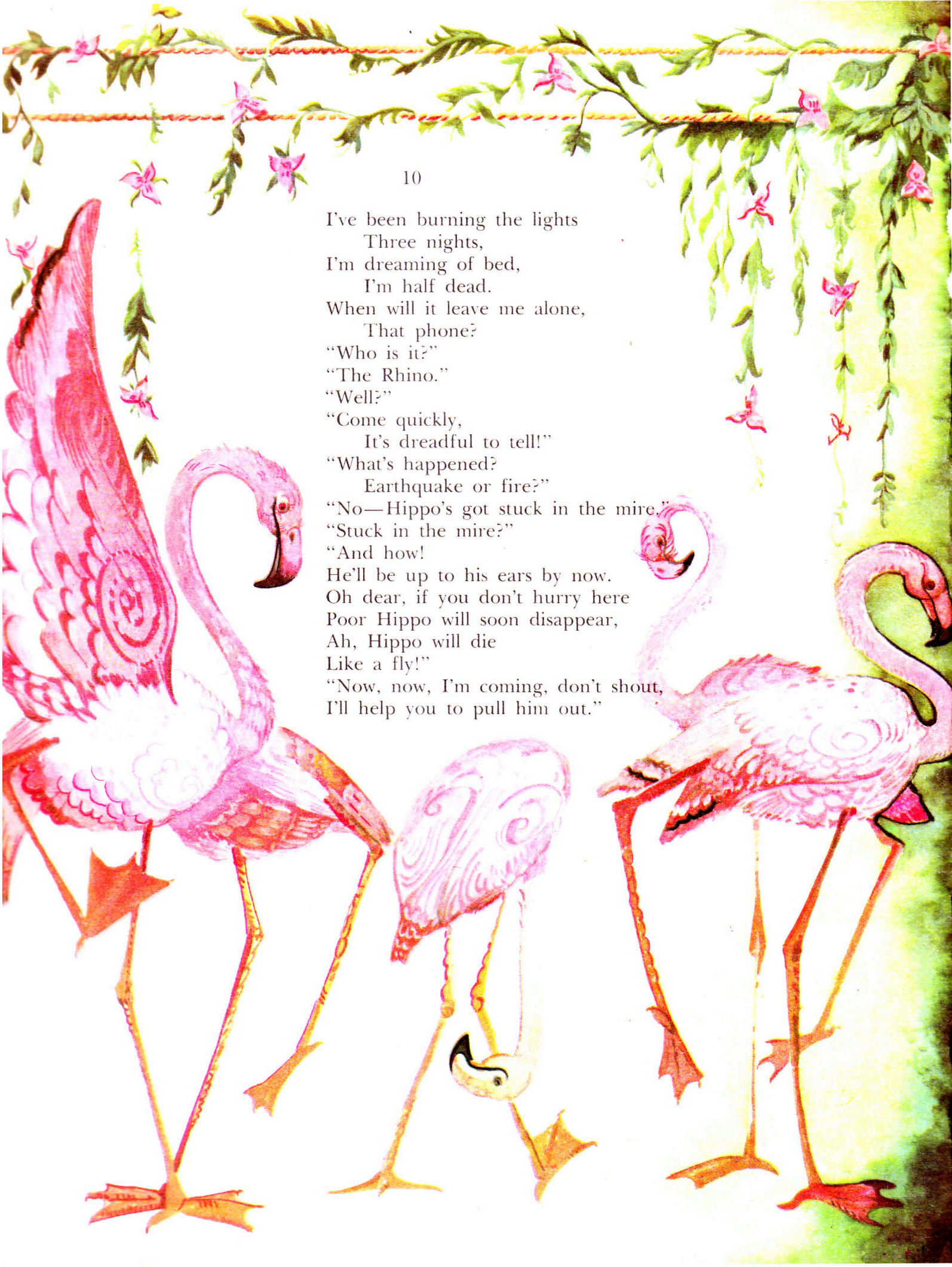
Not so long ago a pair
Of Gazelles rang in despair:
"What has happened with the fair?
Are the seesaws no more there?
It's a loss we couldn't bear!"



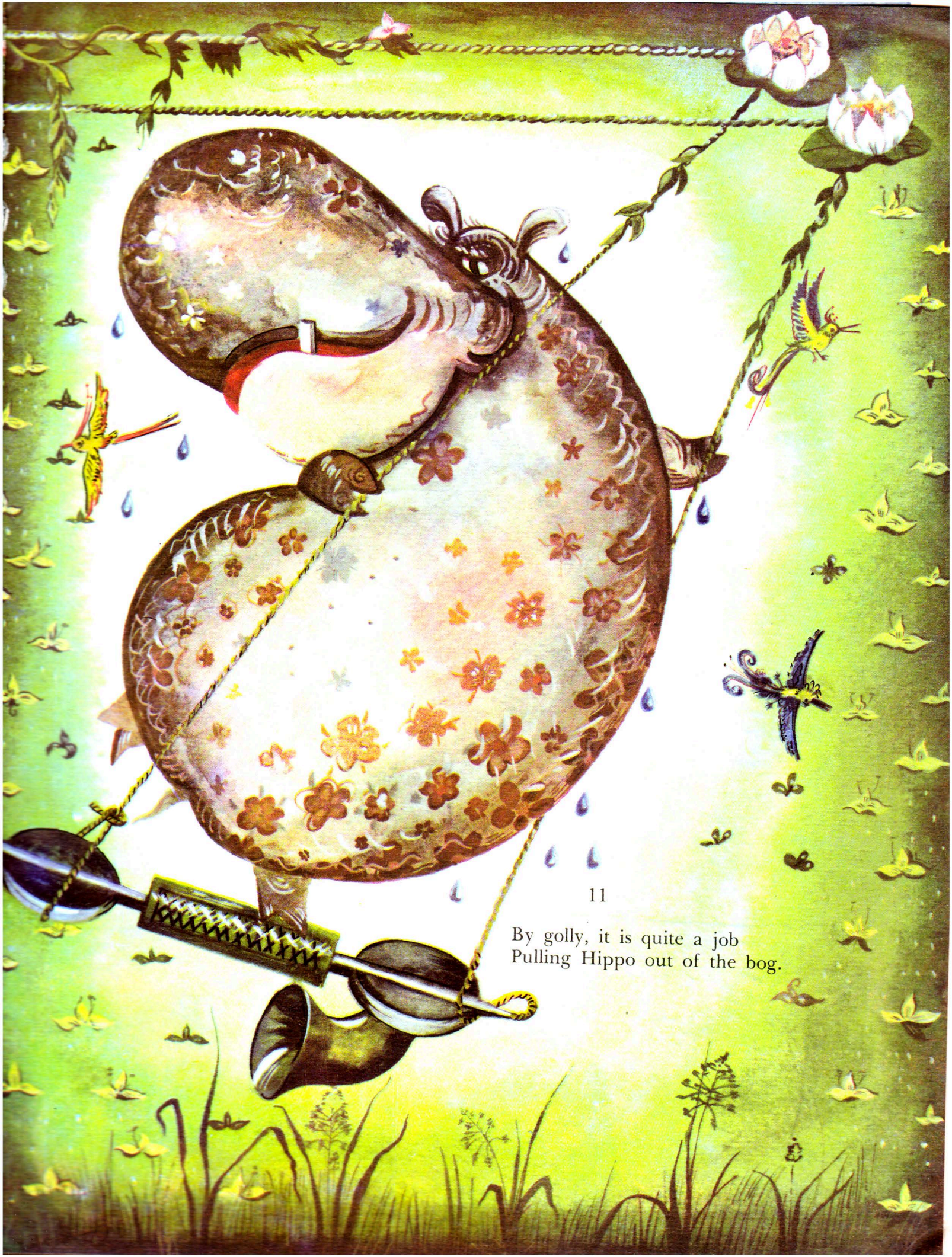
"Tut-tut-tut!
There, there, there!
Nothing's happened to the fair!
Swings and seesaws are all there.
All this racket, I declare,
Is too much for me to bear!
Off with you, now, to the fair!"
Still those silly good-for-nothings
Whined and wailed about the fair.
What a very stupid pair!

9

Last Friday the Kangaroo called:
"This is Wash 'Em Clean's flat, I am told."
I got frightfully angry at that,
So I yelled, "No, it *isn't* his flat!"
"Then where's Wash 'Em Clean?"
"I'm afraid I don't know.
Try seventy-seven-six-o."



I've been burning the lights
Three nights,
I'm dreaming of bed,
I'm half dead.
When will it leave me alone,
That phone?
"Who is it?"
"The Rhino."
"Well?"
"Come quickly,
It's dreadful to tell!"
"What's happened?
Earthquake or fire?"
"No—Hippo's got stuck in the mire."
"Stuck in the mire?"
"And how!
He'll be up to his ears by now.
Oh dear, if you don't hurry here
Poor Hippo will soon disappear,
Ah, Hippo will die
Like a fly!"
"Now, now, I'm coming, don't shout,
I'll help you to pull him out."



11

By golly, it is quite a job
Pulling Hippo out of the bog.

DOCTOR POWDERPILL



1

Dear old Doctor Powderpill,
If you're ailing, if you're ill
Come and see him and be healed,
Beast and bird of wood and field,
Worm and bug and wolf and bear,
Cow and sheep and goat and hare!
Everyone from everywhere
Will receive his aid and care!

2

Once a fox came and paid him a call;
"Oh, a wasp stung my back!" Did she squall

Then a pup came to see him, morose:
"Oh, a hen pecked my poor little nose!"

Mrs. Bunny ran up in a flurry:
"Oh, how sad, how unhappy I am!



English translation © Progress Publishers 1974



My sonny fell under a tram,
My sonny, my bunny
Fell under a tram!

"He hopped and he skipped in the street
When a tram came and cut off his feet.
And now he's in bed, poor bunnikin-boy,
My sonny, my bunny, my only joy!"

But the doctor exclaimed, "Never fear!
Just bring your bunnikin here.
I'll make him a new pair of feet
And again he'll skip in the street!"

And they brought him the bunny, poor dear,
So ill, without any feet,
And the doctor sewed on a new pair
And again he could skip in the street.

And his mother, the old Missis Bun,
Danced around and around with her son.
She laughed and she wept with her joy:
"Thank you, Doctor, for curing my boy!"

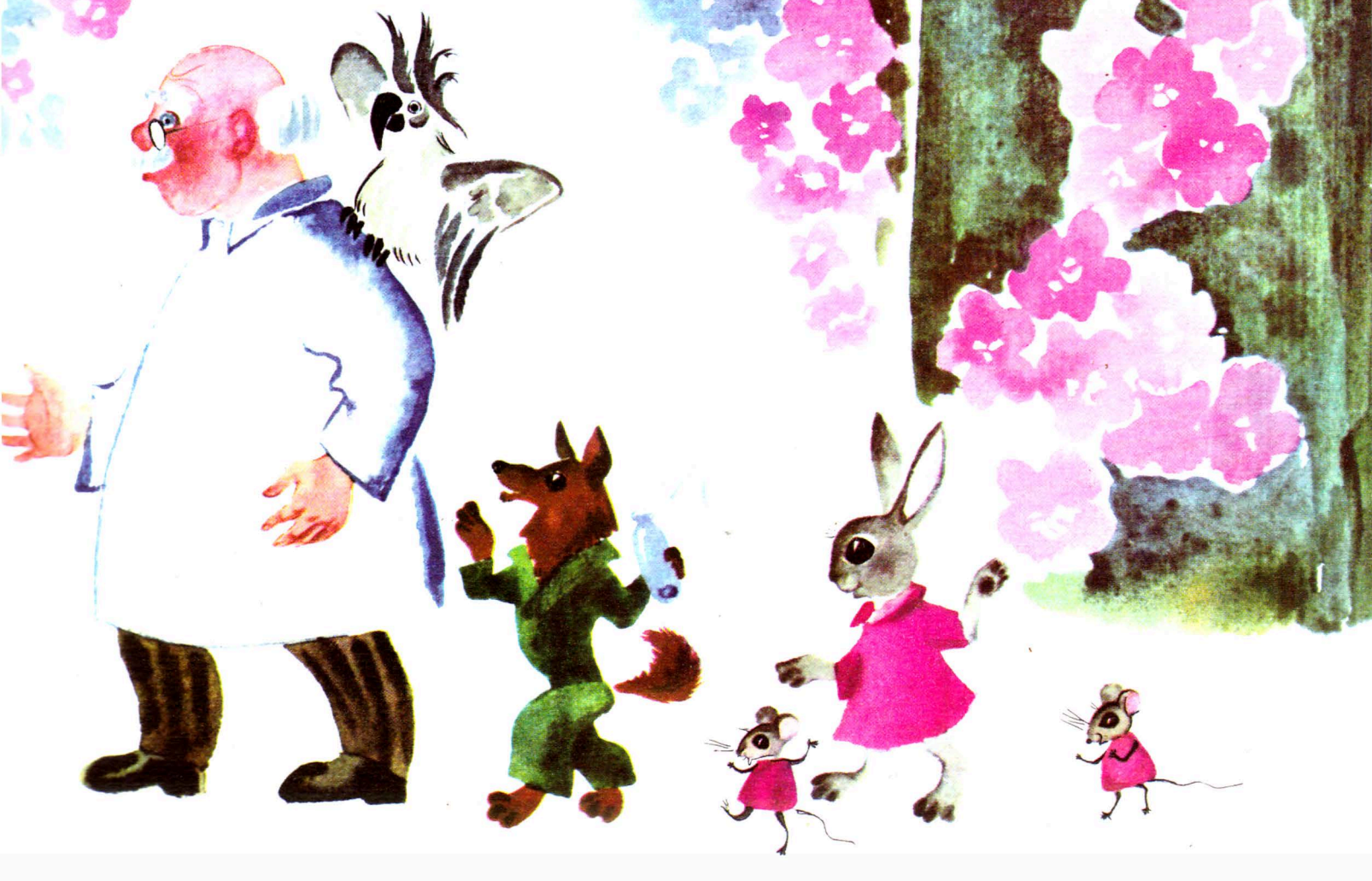
"Really? Truly? What is wrong?
Have they been laid up for long?"

"Yes, oh yes, they've got the 'flu,
Chickenpox and smallpox too,
Measles, mumps, appendicitis,
Malaria and bronchitis.

"Come, dear Doctor Powderpill,
All depends upon your skill!"

"Very well, I'll come, all right,
And help your children in their plight.
Only your address—what is it?
Hill or swamp—what shall I visit?"

"Well, we live in the Sahara,
In the scorching Kalahari,
Up on Mount Fernando-Po,
Where the grumpy Hippo-Poppo
Roams the mighty Limpopo."





Then he goes, Powderpill,
And he runs, Powderpill,
Over marsh, over mire, over dale, over hill,
And one single word he repeats, Powderpill,
"Limpopo, Limpopo, Limpopo!"

The snow fell thick and the night was black:
"Hey, Powderpill, turn back, turn back!"
And he dropped, Powderpill, on his face in the snow:
"I'm tired, too tired to get up and go!"



All at once grey wolves rushed out from a wood
And ran to the spot where the doctor stood:
"Come, mount us, Doctor, and let's be gone.
Quicker than lightning we'll speed you on!"

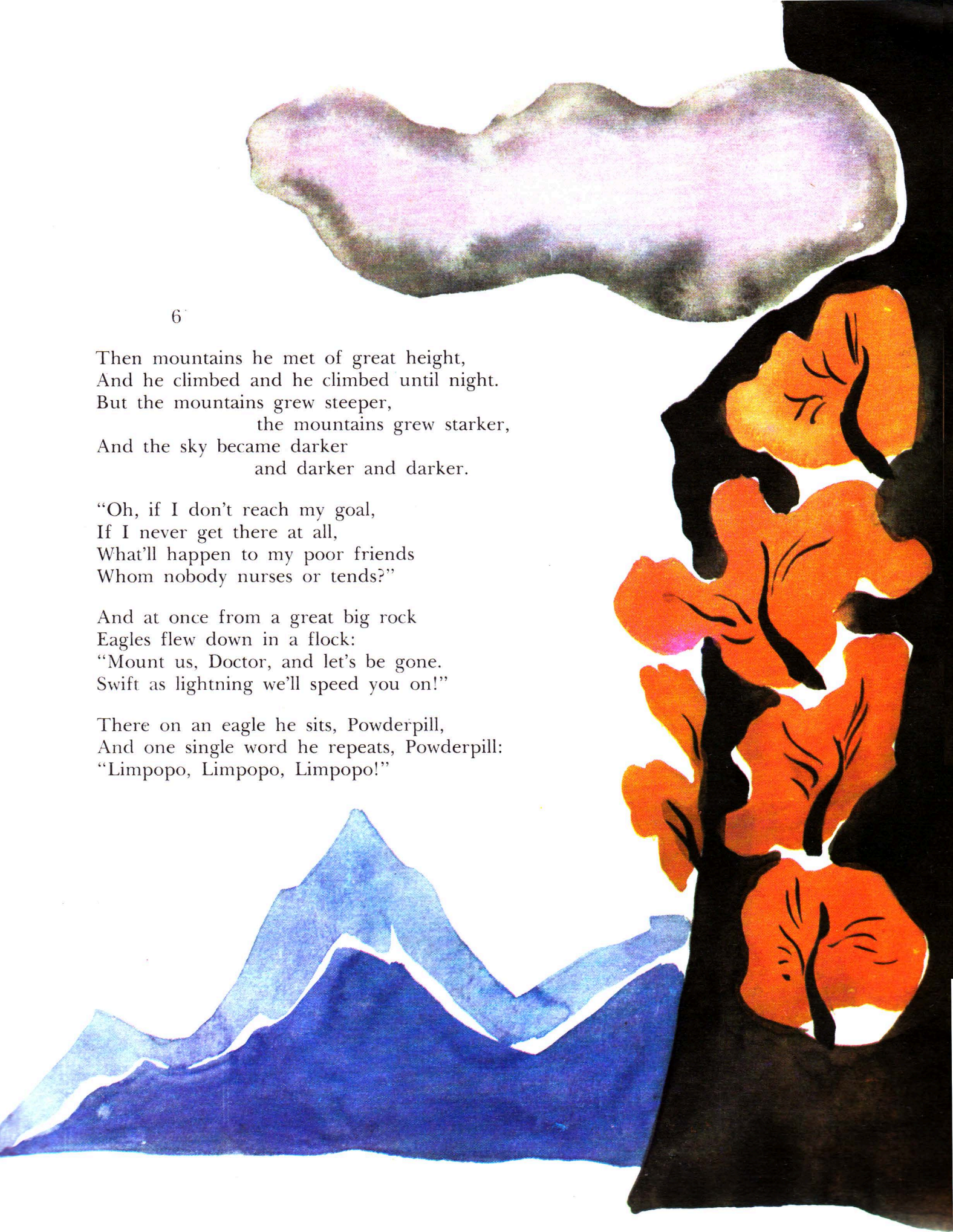
On a big grey wolf gallops Powderpill,
And one single word he repeats, Powderpill:
"Limpopo, Limpopo, Limpopo!"



But soon they arrived at a sea,
Roaring, stormy and free,
With waves so fearfully tall
They'd swallow the doctor, his hat and all!

"Oh dear, if I ever drown
In the waves and go deep, deep down—
What'll happen to my poor friends
Whom nobody nurses or tends?"
Then a whale from the waters chill
Rose and said: "Climb up, Powderpill,
And like a great big ship
In a jiffy I'll make the trip!"

Up on the whale he gets with a will,
And one single word he repeats, Powderpill:
"Limpopo, Limpopo, Limpopo!"



Then mountains he met of great height,
And he climbed and he climbed until night.
But the mountains grew steeper,
the mountains grew starker,
And the sky became darker
and darker and darker.

"Oh, if I don't reach my goal,
If I never get there at all,
What'll happen to my poor friends
Whom nobody nurses or tends?"

And at once from a great big rock
Eagles flew down in a flock:
"Mount us, Doctor, and let's be gone.
Swift as lightning we'll speed you on!"

There on an eagle he sits, Powderpill,
And one single word he repeats, Powderpill:
"Limpopo, Limpopo, Limpopo!"

In Africa, in Africa,
By the mighty Limpopo,
Weeping out his poor old heart
Sits woeful Hippo-Po.



In Africa, in Africa
He sits beneath a tree

And looks and looks from Africa
Upon the deep blue sea:
"When will the doctor's ship arrive,
Dearie, dearie me!"

The rhinos and the elephants
Keep running up to telephones
Asking with impatience:
"When will he see his patients?"

Nearby the baby hippoes
Lie suffering from hiccoughs,
Holding their poor tummies,
Their tummies torn by pain.

The ostrich-chicks, so bad they feel,
Like little pigs they wail and squeal.
The poor dear baby ostriches
Whimper and complain.



They've mumps, appendicitis,
Measles and bronchitis,
Sore throat and tonsillitis,
Their cries are loud and shrill.

They moan and groan in fever:
"Must we wait forever,
Must we wait forever
For Doctor Powderpill?"

Beside them sprawls
a sharp-toothed shark,
A sharp-toothed shark,
A deep-mouthed shark
Whose tots are very ill.

Her poor dear darling sharklings
Are in a dreadful plight:
Their teeth so sharp and sparkling
Keep aching day and night!

Poor grasshopper—o me, o my!
He's hurt his foot
and sprained his thigh.
He doesn't jump, he doesn't leap,
But all he does is sob and weep
With tear-drops falling fast:
"Oh, where is Doctor Powderpill,
When will he come at last?"



But look—in the sky two great eagles appear.
Another ten minutes and they will be here.
On one sits the doctor of world-famous skill—
The doctor, their saviour, the dear Powderpill.
"Hullo to you, Africa," loudly he cries.
"Hurrah!" they all greet him
with tears in their eyes.

The eagle flies slower and slower,
The eagle comes lower and lower.
The doctor lands and runs to their aid
With jam and treacle and marmalade.
He pats the poor hippoes' bellies
And treats them to sweets and jellies,
And takes the poor darlings' temperature.



Then he runs to the tiger
Who came from the Niger
And then to the ape
Who came from the Cape
And gives them all honey,
Hot milk, egg and honey,
Hot milk, egg and honey,
Hot milk, egg and honey to cure them.

Ten nights and ten days
Without sleeping he stays,
Ten days and ten nights
He tends the poor mites
And takes the poor darlings' temperature.

Now at last he's cured the lot,
Limpopo!
Every ill and ailing tot,
Limpopo!
And they all began to giggle,
Limpopo!
Jump and caper, dance and wriggle,
Limpopo!

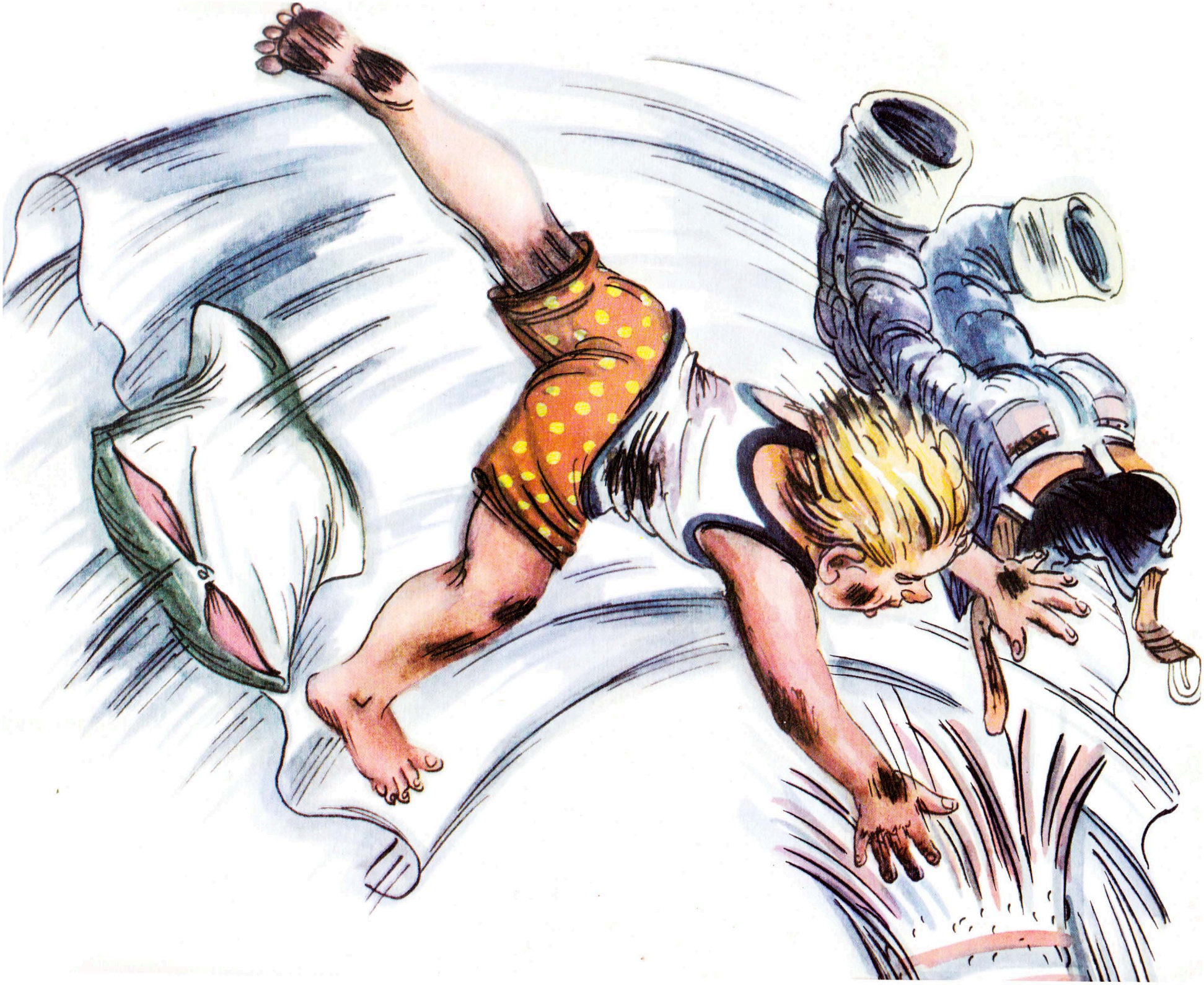
And the huge and fearful shark
Winked its eyes from waters dark
And it laughed and laughed and laughed
As if it suddenly went daft!





And the hippoes, dear, wee fellows,
Puffing, whoofing just like bellows,
Roared and laughed and guffawed so
That the oaks rocked to and fro!

Here comes Hippo, here comes Poppo,
Hippo-Poppo, Hippo-Poppo!
Here comes Hippopotamus,
From the great Kilimanjaro
Through the sands of the Sahara,
Singing gaily, "Long live doctors
Bringing health to all of us!"





WASH 'EM CLEAN

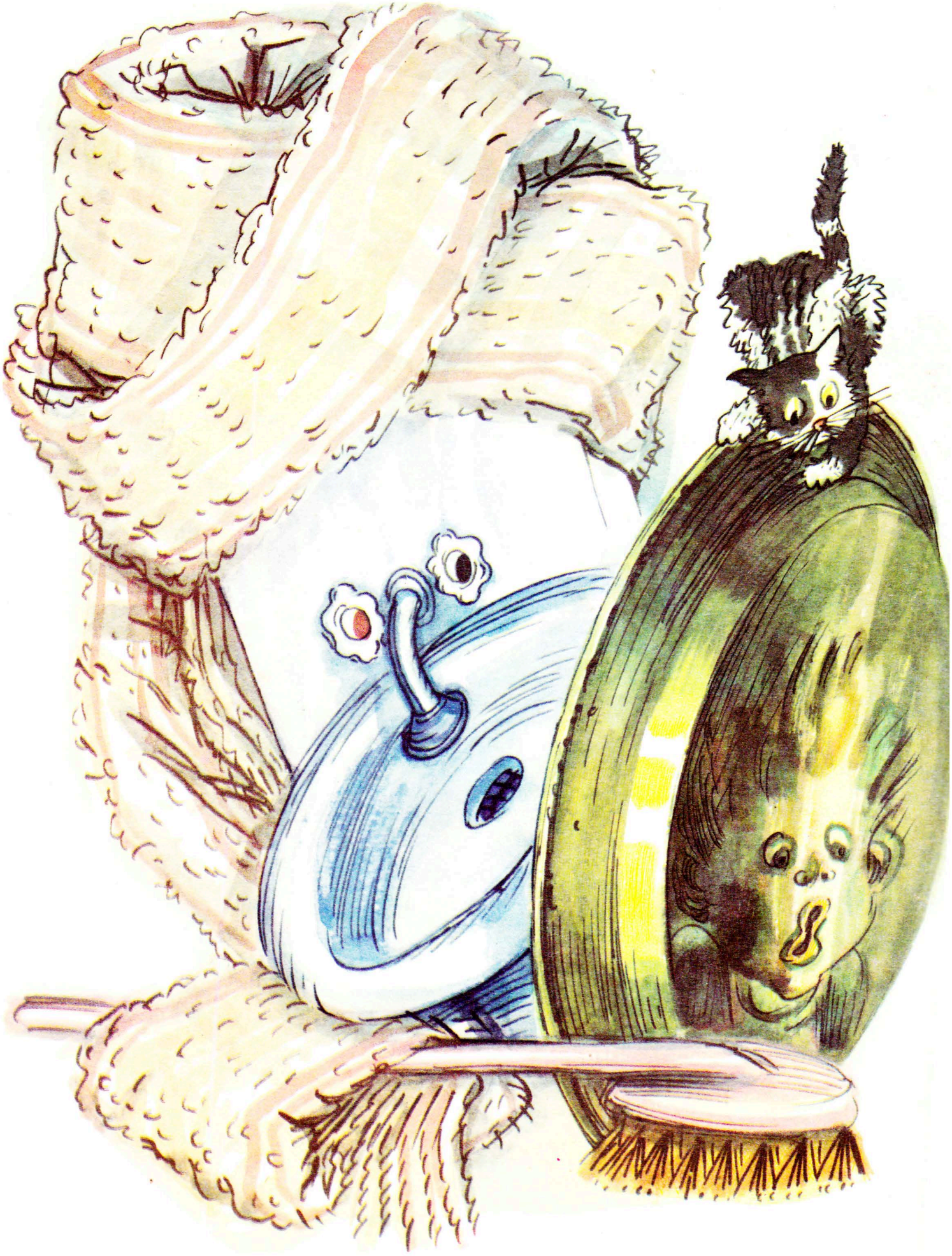
From my bed
The blanket fled,
And the sheet refused to stay,
And the pillow,
Like a billow,
Gathered up and flew away.

I got up to reach the light,
But it also took to flight.
I decided I would look
At my coloured picture-book—
In a twinkling it had fled,
Hiding underneath the bed.

When I thought I'd have some tea,
Cups and saucers ran from me.
Teaspoons, teapot, cream and eggs
Ran as though they all had legs!
What has happened?
What's the matter?

What's the reason
For this rout?
What a tumult,
What a clatter!
Has the world turned inside out?
Mother's irons
chased
the dippers,
While the bird-cage
chased
the slippers,
And the slippers
chased the nippers,
And the poker
chased
the toys.

What a tumult,
What a racket,
What a horrid, horrid noise!



Suddenly from Mummy's bedroom,
Crooked-legged, old and lame,
Straight towards me came the wash-stand,
And he scolded as he came:

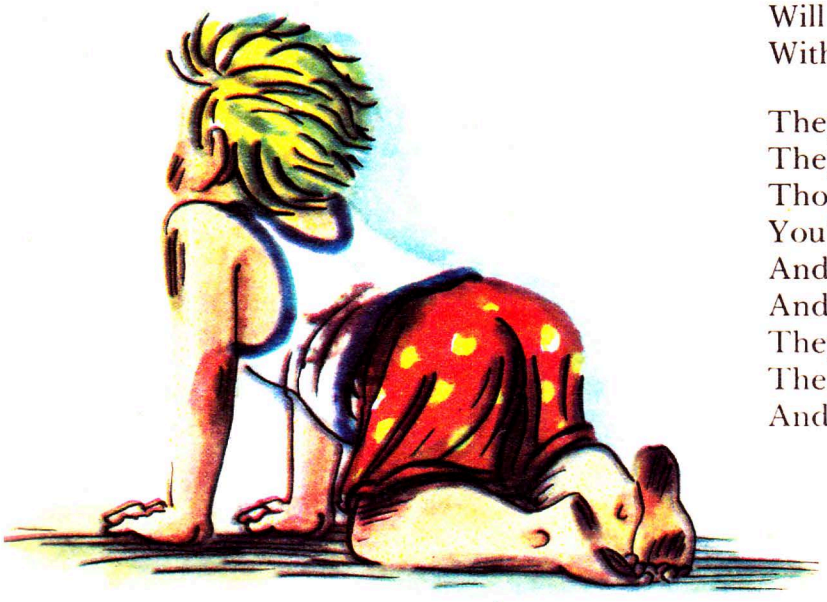
"Oh, you nasty little slacker!
Oh, you naughty little squirt!
There's no chimney-sweep who's blacker,
There's no pig so fond of dirt!
Take a look into the mirror,
See the ink spots on your nose?
And your neck, your dirty fingers,
Never wash them, I suppose?
So no wonder even stockings
Couldn't stand a sight so shocking.

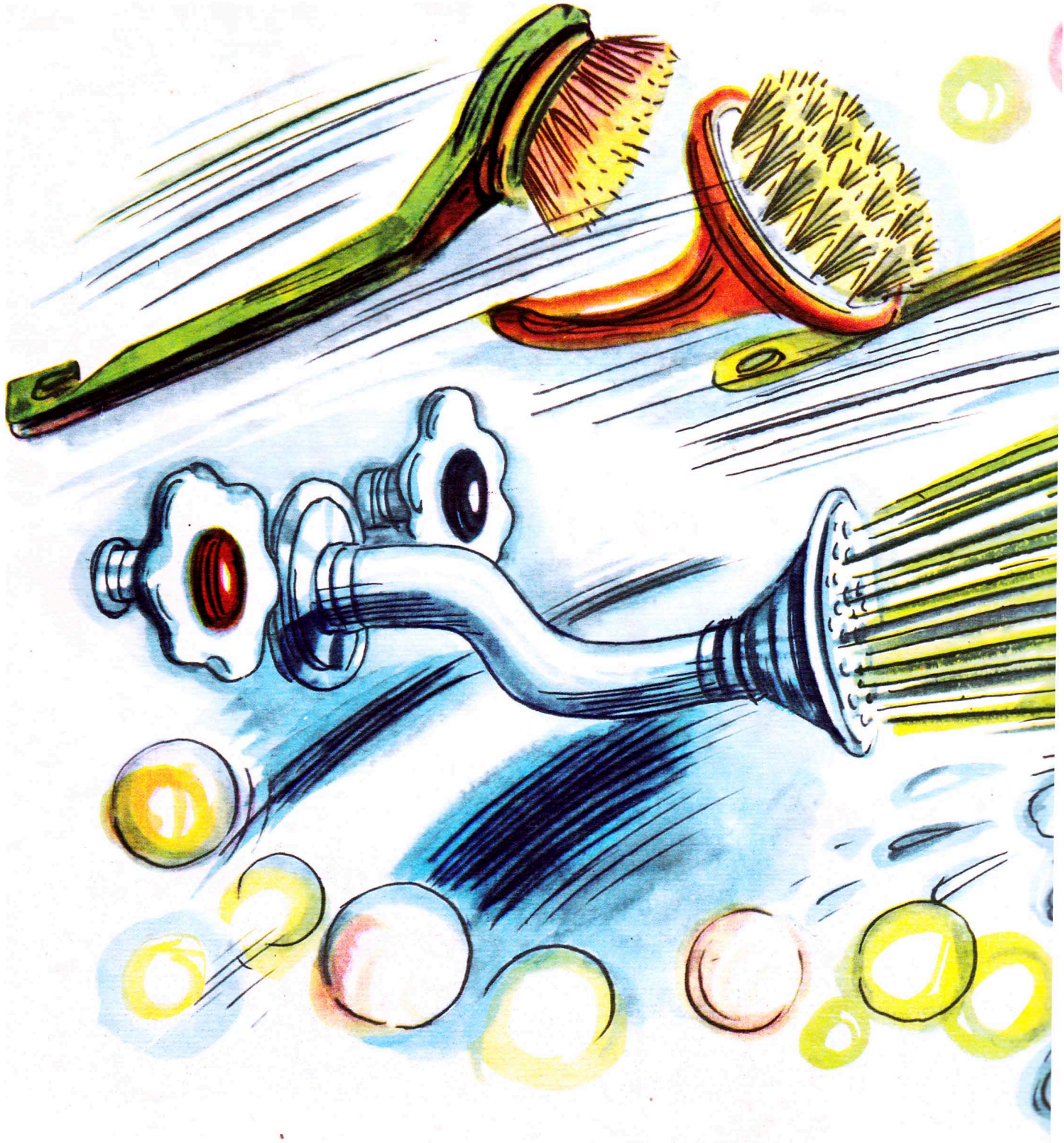
Every morning, bright and early,
All the little mice go washing,
And the kittens, and the ducklings,
And the ants and spiders, too.

All but you have washed this morning,
Brushed their teeth and combed their hair,
You're the only piggy-wiggy,
So you've nothing left to wear!

I'm a great and famous wash-stand,
'Wash 'Em Clean' is what I'm called.
I command the other wash-stands,
I have troops of sponges bold!
If I stamp, or wave my hand,
All the troops at my command
Will come rushing to this room
With a clangour and a boom!

They will start to snort and howl,
They will stamp their feet and growl.
Though it won't be quite a whipping,
You'll be scrubbed until you gleam.
And a dipping,
And a dipping,
They will give you in the stream!"
Then he smote his bowl of brass,
And he cried: "Kara-baras!"



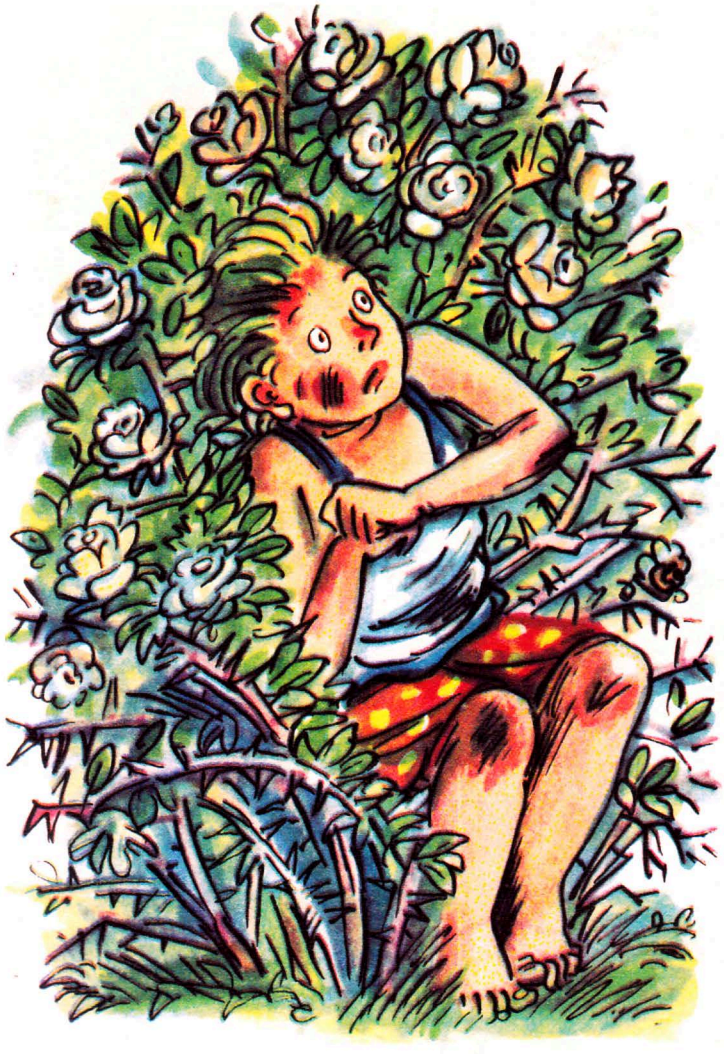


And at once a swarm of brushes
Chirped and darted round like thrushes,
And they scrubbed, and scrubbed and scrubbed me,
Saying as they scrubbed and rubbed me:



"We will wash this little blighter
Whiter, whiter, whiter, whiter!
We will scrub this naughty mite
White, white, white, white!"

Then the soap jumped up, or rather,
Simply pounced upon my head,
And it covered me with lather,
Till I thought I'd soon be dead.

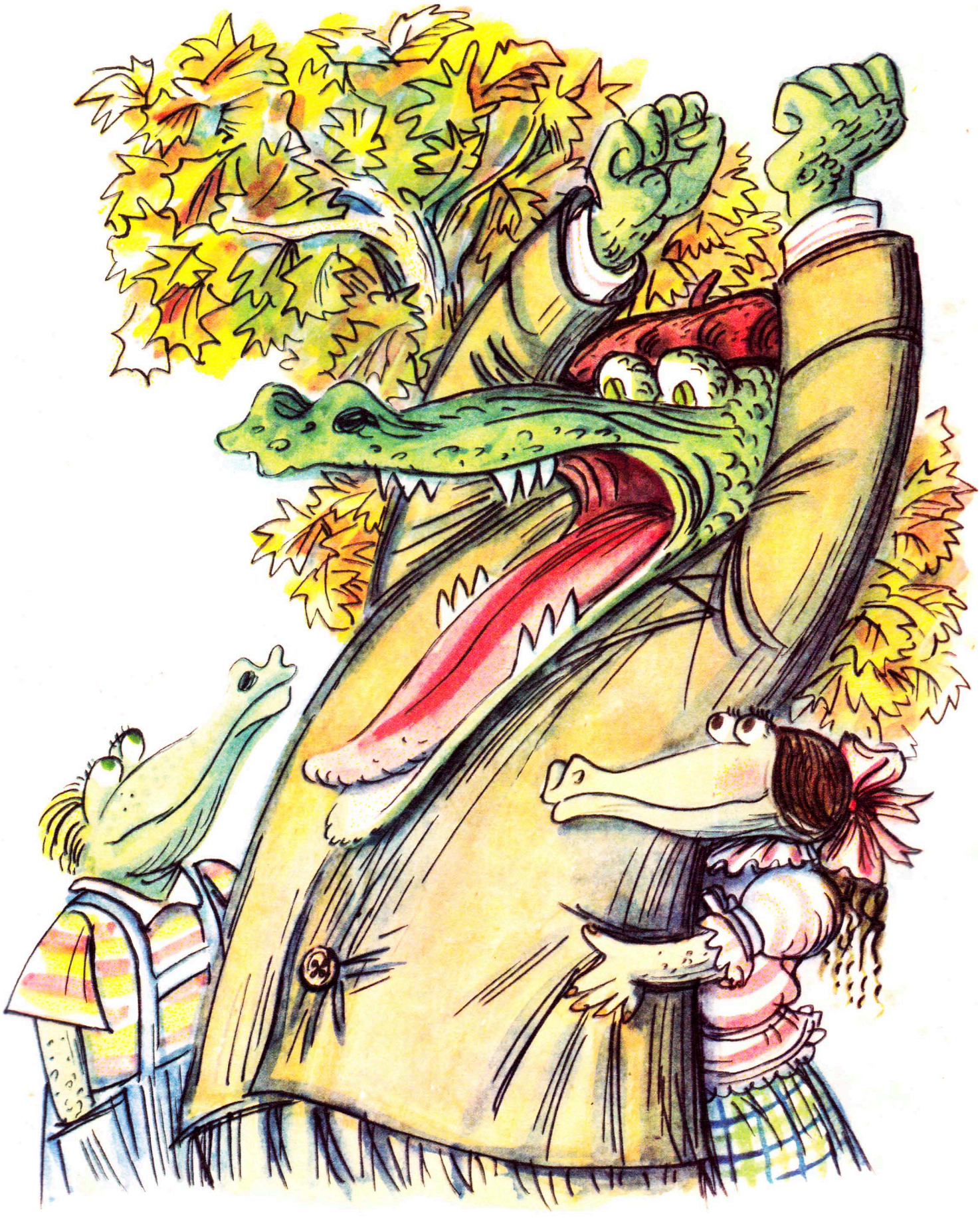


To escape the raging sponge,
In the ocean I could plunge,
But it wouldn't let me be,
Everywhere it followed me.

I rushed out into the square,
Jumped across a railing there,
But it followed like a hound
Biting me at every bound.

Suddenly around a turning
I saw dear old Uncle Croc,
With his twins he was returning
From an early morning walk.
And that sponge which dared to follow,
Like a bit of fluff he swallowed.

Then he turned blood-shot eyes,
and he glared,
Then he stamped and he shouted
and flared.
"What an awful disgrace,"
he exclaimed.
"Go at once and wash your face,"
he exclaimed.
"If you don't, I will beat you!"
he cried.
"If you don't, I will eat you!"
he cried.



I ran homeward like a streak of lighting then,
Till in front of Wash 'Em Clean
I stood again.
Soap and water,
Soap and water,
I applied with all my might.
Washed the dirt off,
Washed the ink off,
Till my face was beaming white.

Back my clothes came in a band,
Jumping straight into my hand.

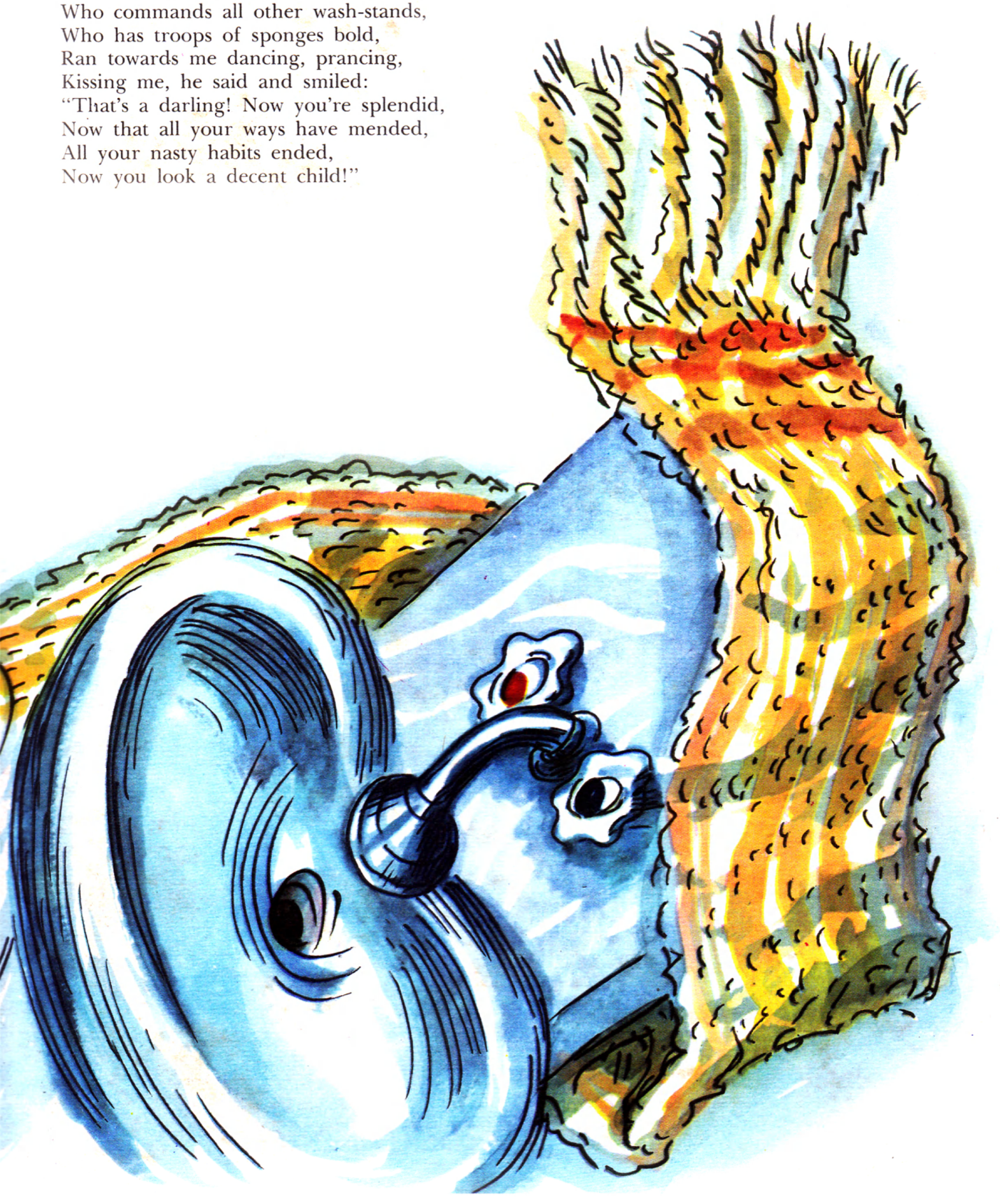
And a pie stood up on end,
Saying: "You can eat me, friend."

Then an apple from the south
Flew and landed in my mouth.

There's my picture-book returning,
All my toys, both small and big,
There's my book of sums and primer
Joining in a merry jig!



Then the great and famous wash-stand,
Wash 'Em Clean, as he is called,
Who commands all other wash-stands,
Who has troops of sponges bold,
Ran towards me dancing, prancing,
Kissing me, he said and smiled:
"That's a darling! Now you're splendid,
Now that all your ways have mended,
All your nasty habits ended,
Now you look a decent child!"



Every morning, every evening,
We must play the washing game,
And to those,
Who're always dirty—
Lasting shame!
Lasting shame!



Hurray for towels and sponges!
Hurray for soapy foam!
Hurray for snow-white tooth-paste!
Hurray for brush and comb!

Then let us all wash every morn, every day,
Let's splash in the water and merrily play
In bath-tubs, in wash-tubs, in basins and bowls,
In oceans, in rivers, with boats and with balls.

Washing is healthy for young and for old,
So glory to water, both steaming and cold!



THE STOLEN SUN

The sun went strolling in the sky
When suddenly a cloud came by.
Bunny took a look outside.
"Oh, how dark it is!" he cried.

And the magpies on the farm
Chattered loudly in alarm.
They hopped about the hills and plains
And shouted to the storks and cranes:
"Listen, listen, everyone,
The crocodile devoured the sun!"

It got dark as dark can be,
Not a thing could people see.
He who ventured in the lane
Was never, never seen again.

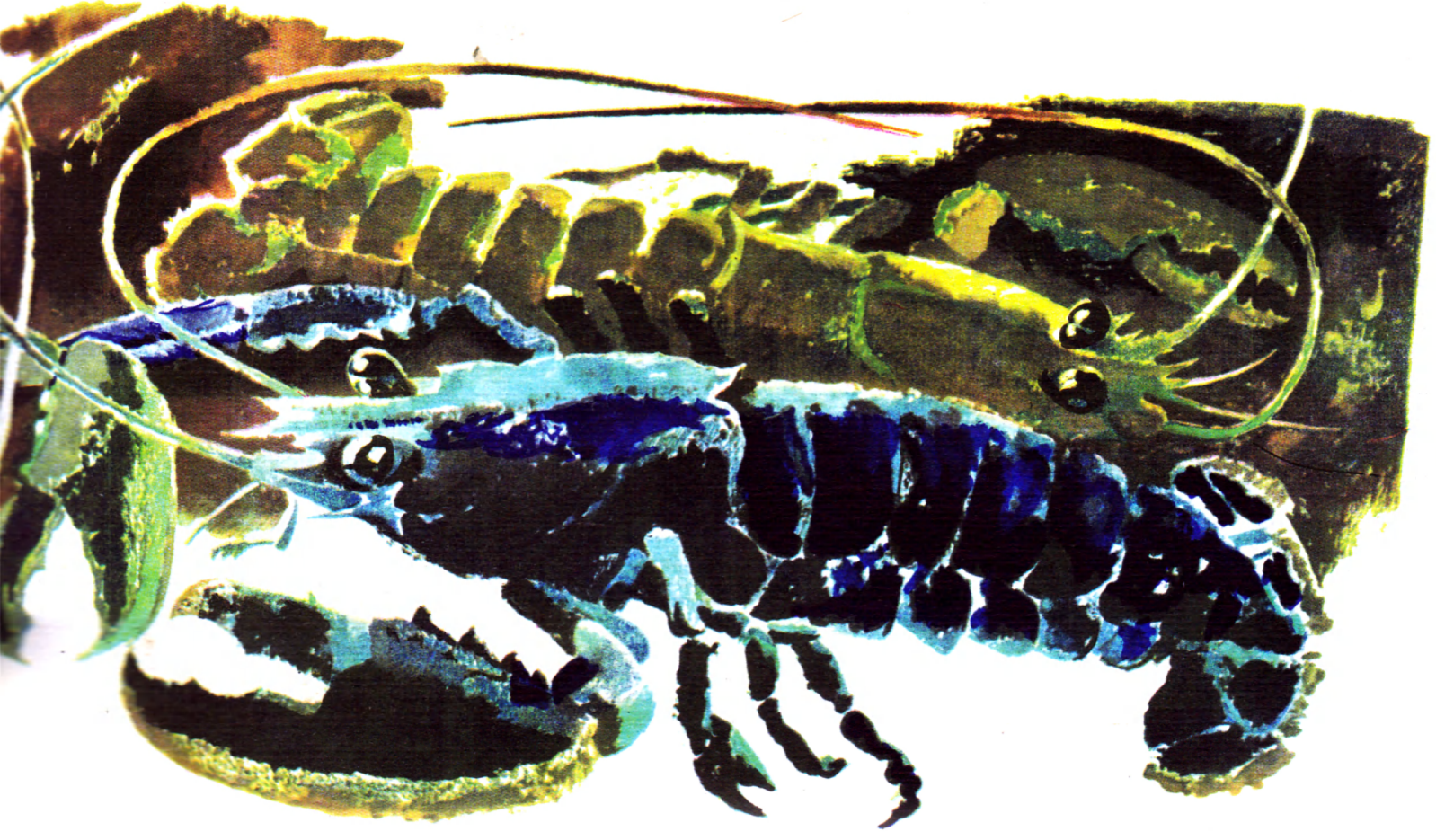
So the timid little sparrow
Kept on sobbing in his sorrow:
"Please, dear sun, come out again!
We can't see to peck our grain!"

And the rabbits wept
As they jumped and leapt:
Home was still so far away
And they couldn't see their way.

Only in the murky swamp
The pop-eyed lobsters dared to ramp
And the wolves beyond the hill
Howled and growled around their kill.









Early, early in the morning
While the land was wrapped in mourning
Loud and sharp came "Rat-tat-tat!"
Goodness gracious, what was that?
Two black sheep were at the gate:
"Come out, folks before it's late!
Come and fight in heroes' style
And save the sun from the crocodile!"

But the shaggy folk were mute,
Afraid to tackle such a brute.
"Such great teeth! And he weighs a ton!
He'll never give us back our sun!"

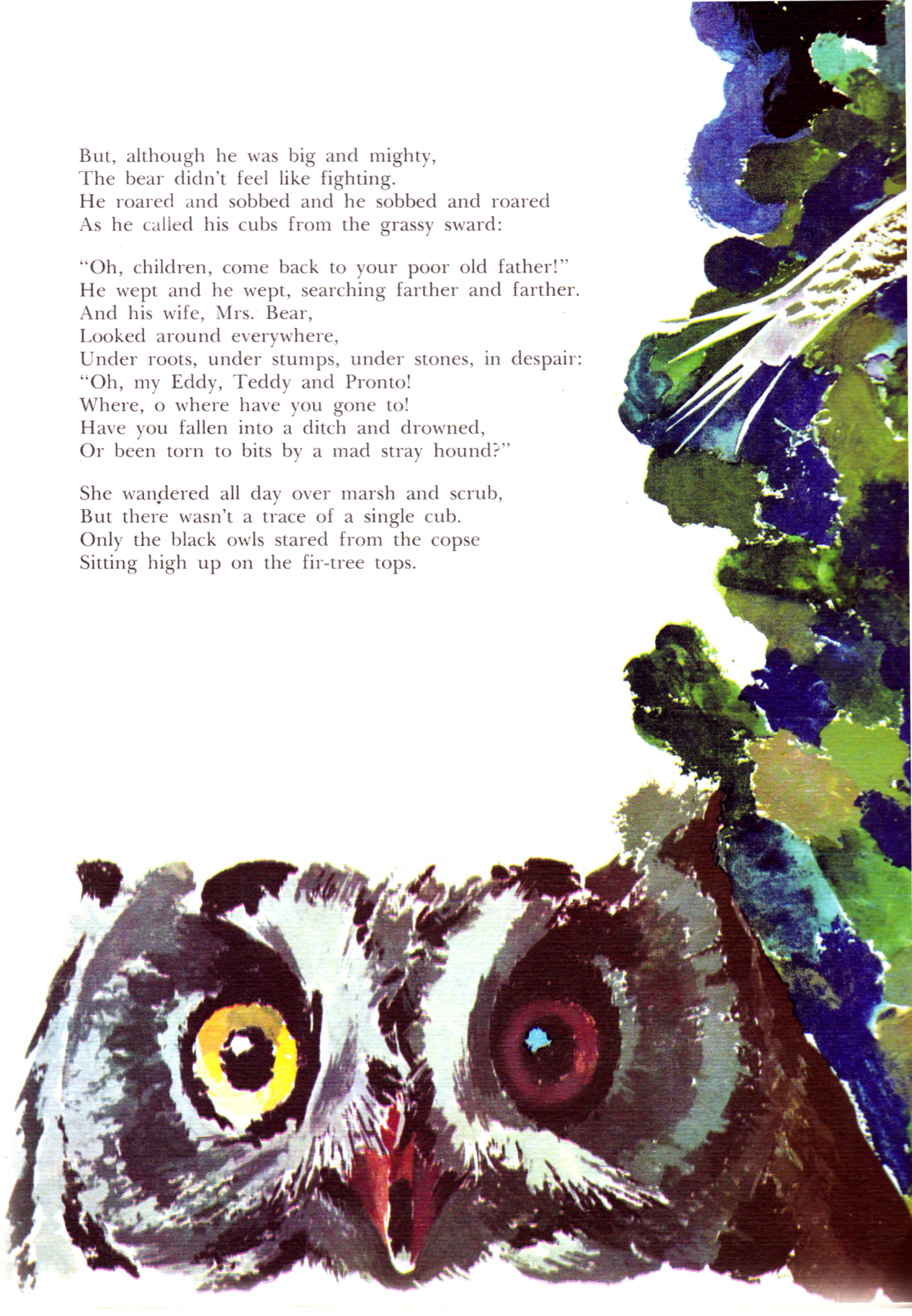
So they ran to the bear in his lair.
"Now, Bruin, there's no time to spare.
Come, Lazy-Bones, leave off sucking your paw,
Help up rescue the sun, let it shine as before."



But, although he was big and mighty,
The bear didn't feel like fighting.
He roared and sobbed and he sobbed and roared
As he called his cubs from the grassy sward:

"Oh, children, come back to your poor old father!"
He wept and he wept, searching farther and farther.
And his wife, Mrs. Bear,
Looked around everywhere,
Under roots, under stumps, under stones, in despair:
"Oh, my Eddy, Teddy and Pronto!
Where, o where have you gone to!
Have you fallen into a ditch and drowned,
Or been torn to bits by a mad stray hound?"

She wandered all day over marsh and scrub,
But there wasn't a trace of a single cub.
Only the black owls stared from the copse
Sitting high up on the fir-tree tops.





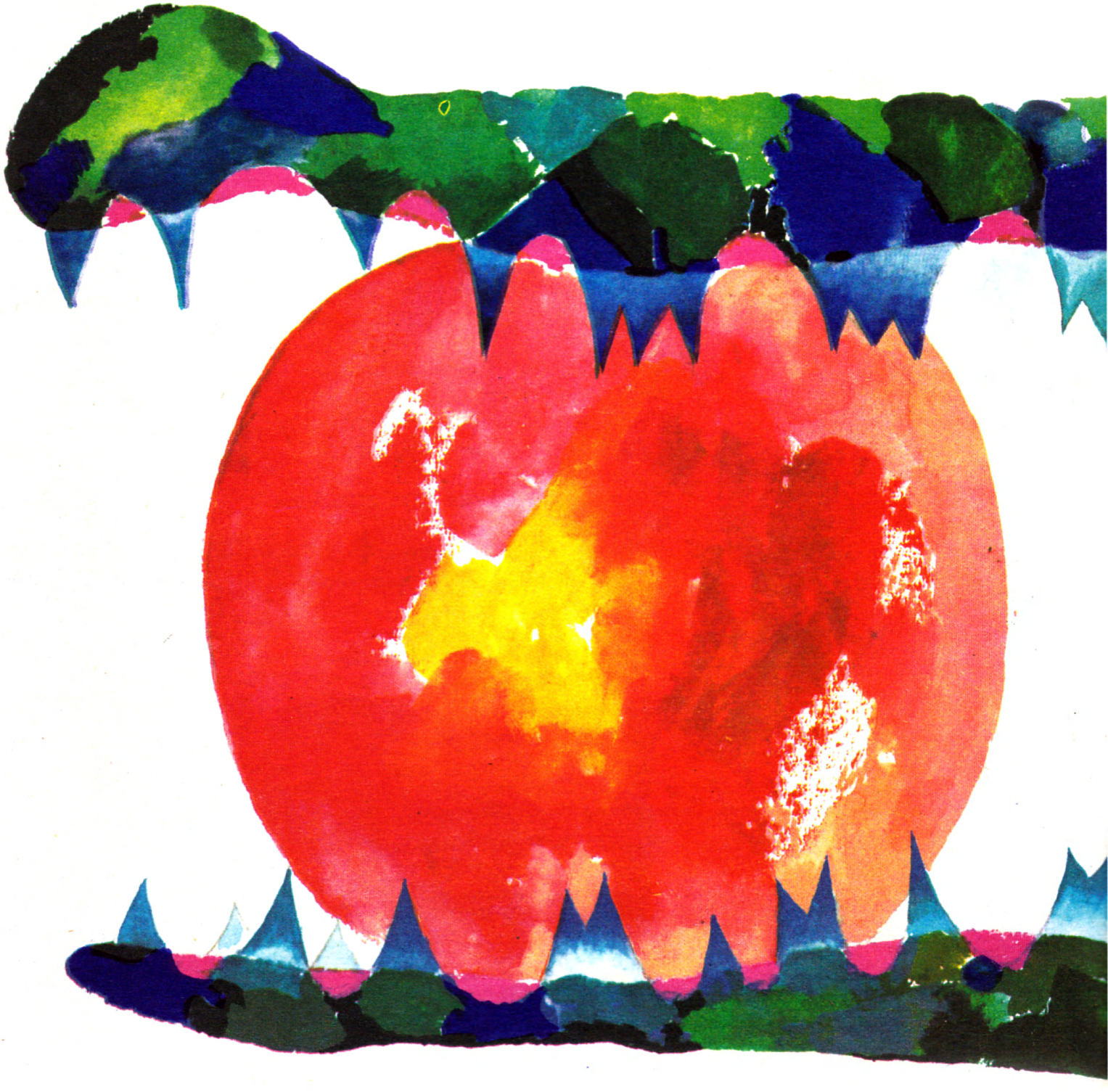
But then Mrs. Bunny popped out
And began to scold him and shout:
"Now, please, stop whimpering there!
Behave like a grown-up bear!

"Go on, Bandy-Legs, and grab him,
By the scaly collar nab him,
Bash him up and underneath,
Tear the sun from his ugly teeth.

And as soon as it returns
To the sky and brightly burns,
All your little ones,
All your pretty ones
Will come running from afar:
'Hullo, Daddy, here we are!'"

And the bear he reared
And the bear he roared
And the bear he ran
To the river ford,

Where the crocodile lay
With the sun, of course,
Shining away
In his dreadful jaws—
The golden sun,
The stolen sun.





Bruin crept up to the beast,
Never frightened in the least:
"Listen here, you ugly crook,
Give us back that sun you took,
Or I'll take you by the scruff
And I'll pound you into snuff!
Yes, I'll teach you how to steal,
You cross between a toad and eel!
All the world's gone dark as ink.
What the dickens do you think?"

But all the rascal did was laugh
Till he almost split in half.
"Get away, you big baboon,
Or I'll gobble up the moon!"

"That's too much to bear!"
Roared the angry bear,
And his fangs went bare
At the enemy.

He hauled him up
And he mauled him up:
"Now, out with the sun, by golly!"





And the crocodile
Soon forgot his smile
And he yelled in fright
With all his might.

From his jaw
From his maw
The sun flew high
Till it reached the sky,



And its bright light fell
Over hill and dell.



"Welcome, welcome, golden sun!"
Gladly shouted everyone.



All the birds took wing
And began to sing
And the rabbits started dancing,
Turning somersaults and prancing
On the meadow by the spring.

Then the bear-cubs came along
And like jolly kittens
Tugged and pulled at their shaggy dad
With their soft brown mittens,
Shouting, calling Dad and Mum,
"Hullo, parents, here we come!"

Every little girl and boy,
Every beast just beamed with joy,
They thanked old Bruin for the rescued sun
And they all had lots and lots of fun.




THE MUDDLE

Once the kittens raised a row:
"Oh, how dull it is to miaow!
Let us better bark like doggies:
Bow-wow-wow!"

After that the ducklings spoke:
"What's the good of quacking, folk?
Let us better croak like froggies:
Groak-croak-croak!"

So the piglets started miaowing:
"Miaow-miaow-miaow!"

And the cats began bow-wowing:
"Bow-wow-wow!"

And the ducklings started croaking:
"Croak-croak-croak!"

And the chickens started quacking:
"Quack-quack-quack!"
Then the sparrow hopped along
And began a milk-cow's song:
"Moo-oo-oo!"

Then came Bruin-Tousled-Fur
And instead of *gr-gr-gr*
Said *"Cock-a-doodle-doo!"*

And the cuckoo shouted too:
"Why have I to say *cu-ckoo?*
Let me grunt like little piggies:
Oink-oink-oink!"

Only little Bunny
Didn't think it funny
To say *miaow*
Or *bow-wow-wow*
He lay beneath a cabbage-head
And in bunny-language said
To coax his naughty playmates:

English translation © Progress Publishers 1980





"Those who say *miaow*
Shouldn't say *bow-wow.*
Those who say *bow-wow*
Shouldn't say *miaow.*
Toads don't fly and flies don't browse
Nor can crows turn into cows!"

But the merry cubs and chicks
Wouldn't stop their naughty tricks,
But went on to shout and roar,
Even louder than before.

Fishes toddled high and dry,
Toads went flying through the sky.
Mice set traps and caught a cat:
In a mouse-trap Pussy sat,

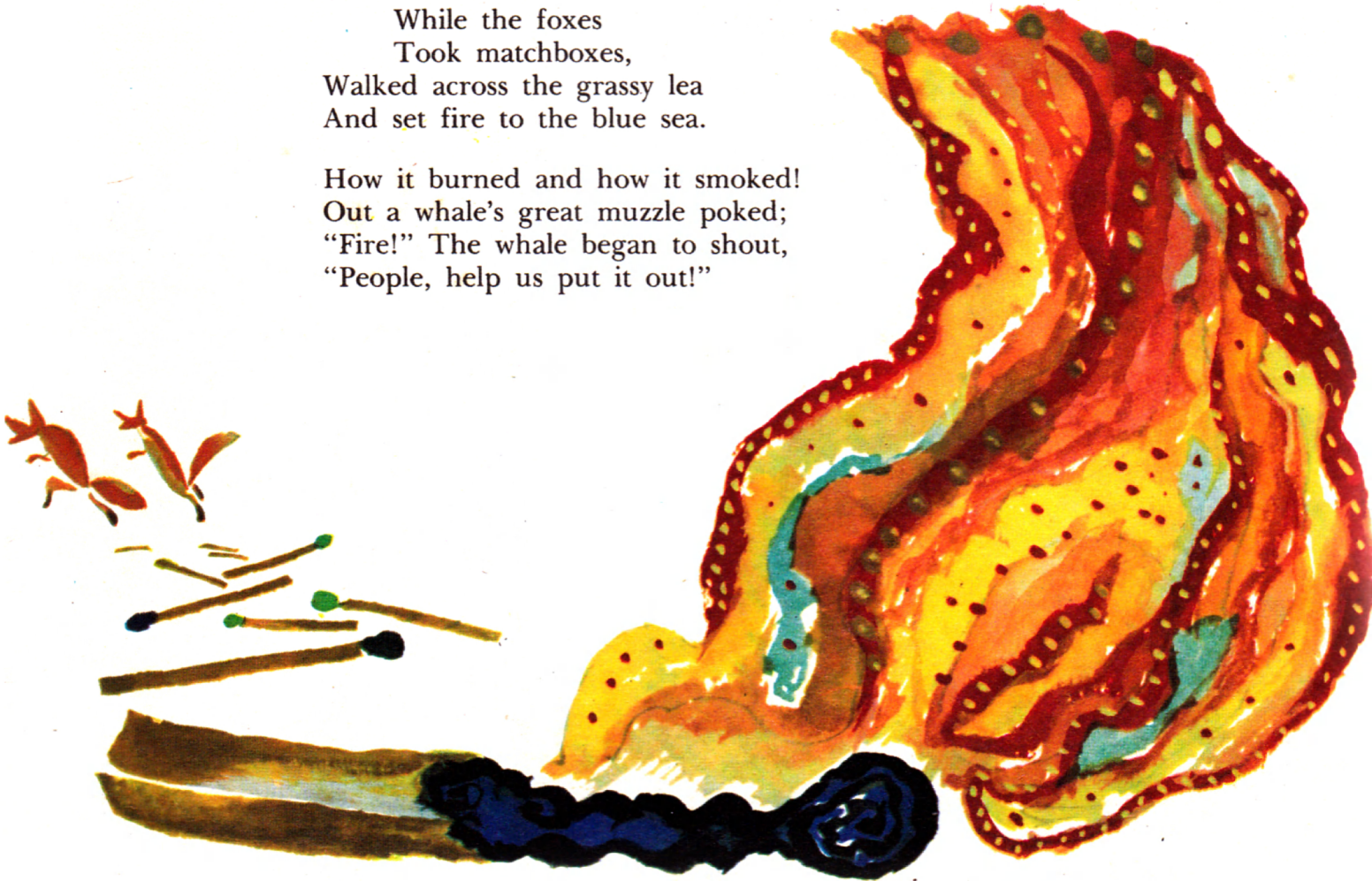


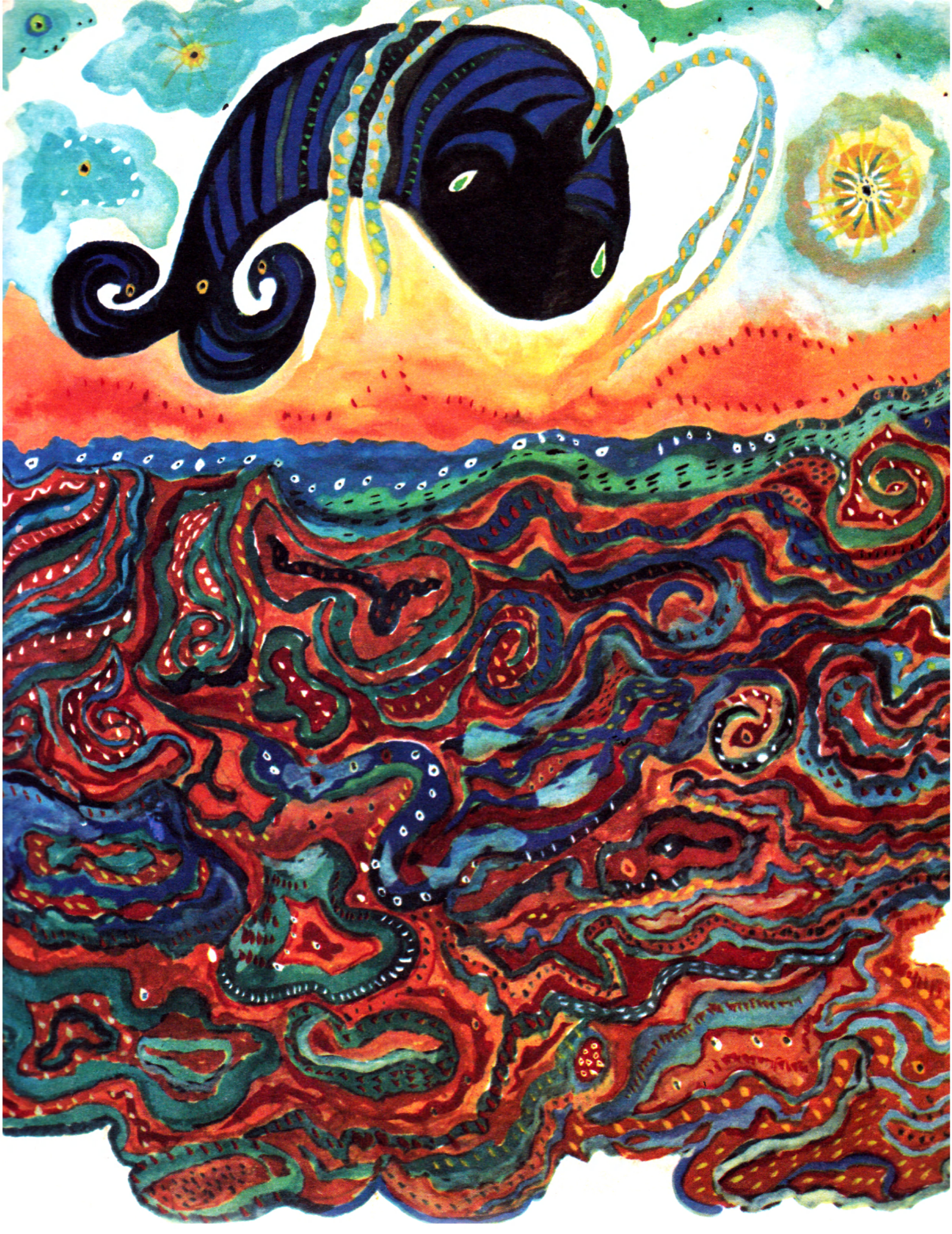




While the foxes
Took matchboxes,
Walked across the grassy lea
And set fire to the blue sea.

How it burned and how it smoked!
Out a whale's great muzzle poked;
"Fire!" The whale began to shout,
"People, help us put it out!"







Running up, the crocodile
Tried to quench the flames a while
With dry mushrooms, cakes and pies,
Yet the flames still reached the skies.

With a barrel came two hens,
But the flames were too immense.

From the lakes two rufflings swam,
Bringing water in a pan.

With a wooden bucket last
Two young frogs came running fast.
Long they poured and poured and poured,
But the flames just roared and roared.



Then a butterfly flew by,
Flapped and fluttered from the sky;
Quieter, quieter grew the flames
And went out.



Full of joy, the beasts and birds
Danced and sang in flocks and herds,
Stamped their feet and wagged their tales
Over all the woods and dales.

Baby goslings honked once more
As they used to do before:
"Honk-honk-honk!"

Cats and kittens purred and miaowed:
"Miaow-miaow-purr!"

And the birdies sang aloud:
"Tweet-tweet-tweet!"

Foals and colts began to neigh:
"Hee-haw-haw!"

Flies and beetles buzzed away:
"Zzz-zz-zz!"

And the little froggies croaked:
"Croak-croak-croak!"

And the little ducklings quacked:
"Quack-quack-quack!"



Beasts and birds, both tame and wild,
Flocking in from earth and sky,
Sang in chorus to my child:
Lulla-lulla-by!"

К. Чуковский

СКАЗКИ

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FAIRY TALES

KORNEI CHUKOVSKY

